

CONSULAR TREATY WINS SENATE TEST

Committee Backs It, 15-4—
Pact's Approval on Floor
Is Now Expected Soon

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The Senate Foreign Relations Committee advanced the Administration's East-West bridge building program today by approving the United States-Soviet consular treaty by a vote of 15 to 4.

The three-year-old treaty is now expected to be called up for Senate action in the next two weeks. Indications are that it will easily receive the two-thirds vote needed for approval.

One indication was the announcement by Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois, the Senate minority leader, that he would support the treaty. A number of Republicans who had been undecided were expected to swing over to his position.

On another East-West measure supported by the Administration, a House Banking subcommittee approved unanimously today a proposed deal in which the Government's Export-Import Bank would grant loans for the sale of \$50-million worth of United States machine tools for use in a large new automobile plant being built in the Soviet Union by Italy's Fiat.

'A Significant Step'

The sale, which has run into much the same type of political opposition as the consular treaty, would be the biggest commercial transaction between the two nations since the United States wheat shipments in 1964-65.

The Foreign Relations Committee's lopsided vote reflected the brightening prospects for the Consular treaty, which has become important in the Administration's program of attempting to build understanding between the United States and Communist countries of Eastern Europe.

The consular convention establishes the guidelines for resumption of consular relations, broken off in 1948. When the treaty was first signed in June, 1964, President Johnson described it as "a significant step in our continuing efforts to increase contacts and understanding" between the Soviet and American peoples.

Since 1964, however, the Administration has hesitated to bring the treaty to the Senate floor because of uncertainty over whether it would be approved.

Much of the opposition has stemmed from a treaty provision granting diplomatic immunity to consular officials — a provision that opponents have argued would give encouragement to Soviet espionage in the United States.

The same uncertainty confronted the treaty when the Administration decided early this year to make a concerted attempt to secure Senate approval.

But the prospects have brightened considerably in recent weeks, largely as a result of efforts to neutralize the opposition by obtaining public assurances from J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, that the treaty

would not raise any espionage problems that the agency could not handle.

In the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the opposition was reduced to four members — one fewer than when the committee approved the treaty, 14 to 5, in 1965. In opposition were Democratic Senators Frank J. Lausche of Ohio and Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut and Republican Senator S. Karl E. Mundt of South Dakota and John J. Williams of Delaware.

Hickenlooper Backs Pact

Another prominent Republican, Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper of Iowa, the senior minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee who is chairman of the Republican Policy Committee — also endorsed the treaty.

In a switch from his position

in 1965, he voted for it in committee today. In explaining his shift, he said he had decided that "on balance" the pact was "in the interest of the United States."

Senator Dirksen, who had been maintaining an ambiguous position on the treaty, announced to his party colleagues at a Republican Policy Committee luncheon that he would support it.

According to Capitol Hill "nose counts," some 45 Democrats can be expected to vote for the treaty. Combined with some 26 Republican votes, this would provide more than the required two-thirds vote of approval.